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Directorate of
Intelligence

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CIA/DI-----INSITREP 90-006

International Narcotics Situation Report

June 1990

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Mexico-US: Tensions in the Drug War

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Mexico's Navy Trying To Tackle the Counternarcotics Mission

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Mexico-US: Tensions in the Drug War

Under President Salinas, Mexico's counternarcotics effort has improved significantly. The first Mexican president to treat narcotics as a national security threat, Salinas has moved aggressively against drug interests by increasing financial, human, and materiel resources to fight traffickers. Cooperation with Washington in the drug wars has also improved, although traditional sensitivity over perceived US meddling in Mexican internal affairs is a limiting factor. Incidents such as the recent abduction of a Mexican citizen allegedly involved in the murder of a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent can cause rifts in the relationship.

Background

Salinas has pursued a more vigorous antinarcotics campaign than his predecessors, including the arrest of heretofore untouchable narcotics kingpins and enhanced interdiction efforts.

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up nationalistic sentiment that may endanger economic and political reforms, Salinas will avoid actions that appear to compromise Mexican sovereignty. In light of the negative public response to the kidnapping incident, Salinas might insist that drug-related information obtained by one side be shared with the other; such an arrangement could allow him to claim direct benefits from DEA operations in Mexico. In any event, Salinas probably will seek to keep cooperative efforts low-key and out of the public domain and will look increasingly to multilateral forums to promote Mexican interests. [REDACTED]

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Outlook

In our judgment, Salinas will continue his strong support for antinarcotics programs and cooperate with Washington as long as he perceives that Mexico benefits. To prevent opposition critics from whipping

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Mexico's Navy Trying To Tackle Multiple Missions

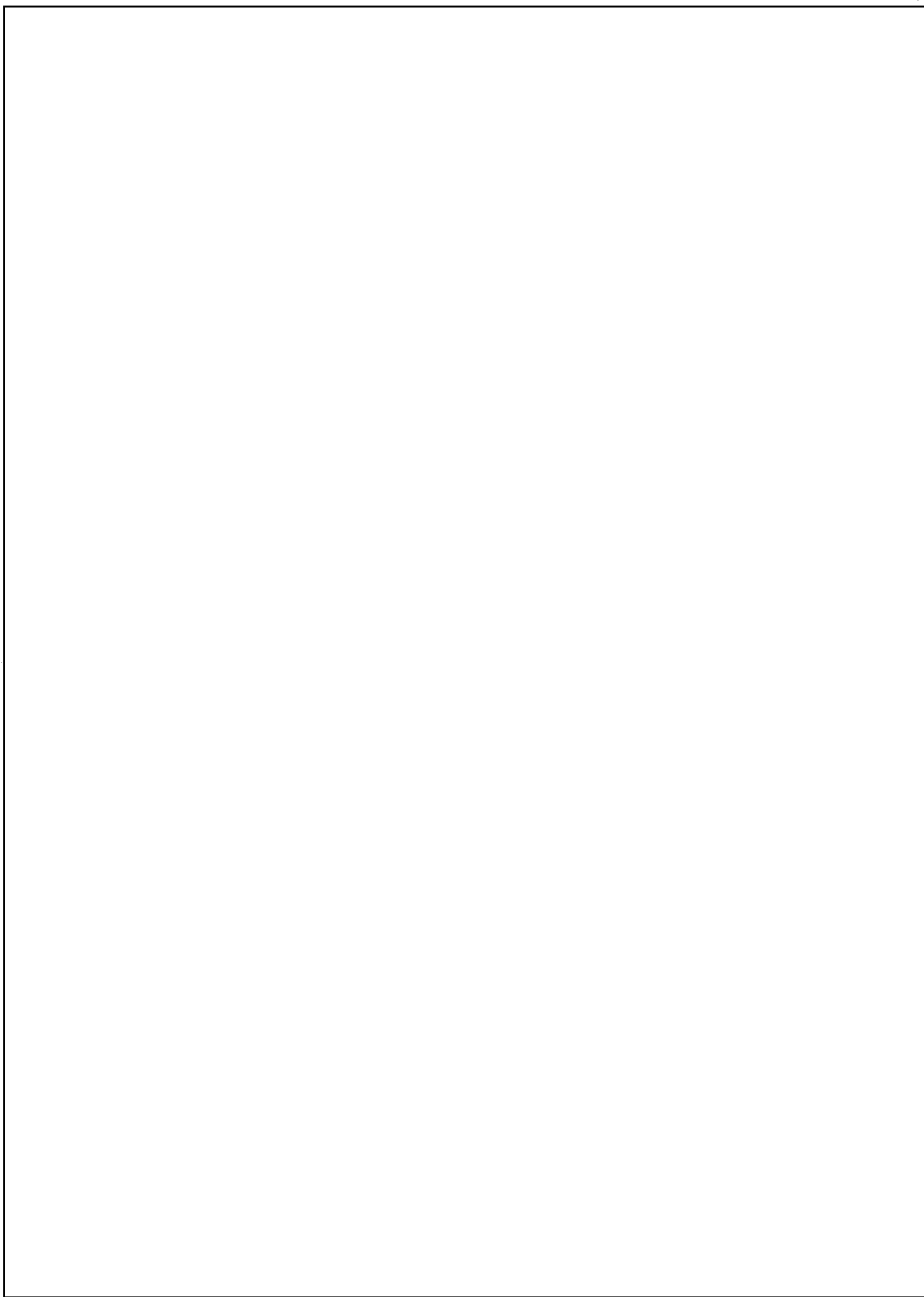
Faced with aging equipment and the demands of an expanding role in counternarcotics operations, the Secretary of the Navy has proposed an ambitious force modernization plan. The plan is aimed at improving the Navy's ability to safeguard Mexico's territorial and strategic interests and calls for nearly doubling the size of the fleet and significant boosts in manpower and materiel. Given Mexico's financial straits, however, the government probably will be unable to allocate sufficient funds to bring the plan to fruition. As a result, naval operational capabilities are likely to remain low.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Navy's primary mission is to patrol Mexico's 9,340-kilometers coastline and to protect resources found within the 200-nautical-mile economic zone that Mexico claims. Typical duties include interdicting vessels transporting contraband—mainly drugs and illegal arms—and preventing illegal fishing. The Navy also is responsible for defending offshore oil installations and performing search-and-rescue operations.

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